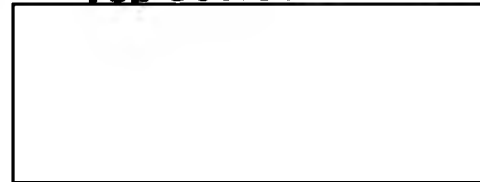


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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence Memorandum

RECENT NORTH VIETNAMESE ACTIVITIES BETWEEN THE 19TH
AND 20TH PARALLELS

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25 June 1968



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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
25 June 1968

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Recent North Vietnamese Activities
Between the 19th and 20th Parallels

Summary

There appears to be no abatement of the high levels of logistic, construction, and repair activities observed in North Vietnam. South of the 20th Parallel, resupply activities continue at a high level and air defense capabilities are being improved. Construction and repair activities under way north of the 20th Parallel will reduce the vulnerability of important target systems in the event of a renewal of the bombings.

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there is little new intelligence on activities between the 19th and 20th Parallels.

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South of the 20th Parallel, heavy truck movements toward Laos and the DMZ continue. Vehicle sightings during the past week were about 50 percent above the weekly average since 31 March. Truck park and storage complexes in the Panhandle are being expanded and increased. Water traffic in the Vinh area is at high levels. Large steel-hull barges, rarely seen south of Thanh Hoa prior to April, are being used more frequently.

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Note: This memorandum was produced solely by CIA. It was prepared jointly by the Office of Economic Research and the Office of Current Intelligence and was coordinated with the Director's Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs.

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North Vietnam continues to enhance its economic and military capabilities north of the 20th Parallel. Blast walls are under construction around electric powerplants at Nam Dinh, Haiphong West, and Hon Gai, and those at the Hanoi powerplant have been completed. At least 15 new rail bypasses have been started since 1 April. All of the original bridges on the key Hanoi-Dong Dang rail line are now serviceable, including the Paul Doumer Bridge. Expansion of the runway at Kep Airfield has been completed,

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The North Vietnamese trade delegation headed by Le Thanh Nghi has completed its annual tour of Eastern Europe and is now in Moscow. Trade and aid agreements for 1969 have been signed with Hungary, Bulgaria, Poland, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany. Supplementary aid agreements for 1968 also have been signed with Hungary, Bulgaria, Poland, Rumania, and East Germany. Seaborne imports continue to arrive at Haiphong at a rate about equal to the record level observed in May.

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South of the 20th ParallelLogistic Activity

[REDACTED]

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Heavy vehicle movements continue on the principal inland highway routes leading south from the sanctuary area above the 19th Parallel toward Laos and the DMZ. More than 1,000 vehicles were sighted [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] This number is nearly 50 percent above the weekly average noted since the bombing restrictions went into effect,

[REDACTED] weekly average. Convoys of 20 or more vehicles were sighted -- generally at night -- on Routes 7 and 72 north of the Vinh area and also further to the south along Routes 151, 101, 107, and 137 leading toward the Laotian border.

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2. South of the 19th Parallel, the North Vietnamese are increasing and expanding their truck park and storage complexes in the Panhandle. Several new truck parks, open storage areas, petroleum storage areas, and ammunition storage facilities have been detected along the major highway routes. Some of the more important facilities are those at Xom Thanh (at the junction of Routes 15 and 101), Tien Luong (about 10 nautical miles west of Quang Khe on Route 110) and points on Route 72, west of Vinh. [REDACTED] a vehicle staging area, reveals a high level of activity. A Forward Air Controller report of 16 June revealed that attacks in the area on 16 June resulted in small secondary ammunition explosions for four hours.

At Tien Luong, [REDACTED] considerable construction activity, with bunkers, revetments, and open storage areas being added. Along Route 72, between Phuc Thuy and the junction of Route 151, several new truck parks, underground petroleum storage areas, and ammunition storage facilities have been reported. [REDACTED] indicate that this route is increasingly being used as an alternate to Route 1A into Vinh.

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3. Watercraft continue to be active in the Vinh area, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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[redacted] revealed 640 waterborne logistic craft on the water routes leading into and out of the city. Most of the craft -- large sampans of about a 10-ton capacity -- were within six miles of Vinh. Several larger craft were noted, including LCM's. The use of large craft south of Thanh Hoa was very unusual prior to April 1968. Since that time, however, numerous large steel-hull barges and LCM's have been noted. Most of these craft have been located on the Song Ca, the main waterway in the Vinh area.

[redacted]

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Air Operations

6. Reports of enemy helicopters and fixed wing aircraft flying in the DMZ area persist. [redacted]

[redacted]

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8. The North Vietnamese are also beefing up their antiaircraft defenses in southern North Vietnam. Some 100-mm guns have been spotted near the DMZ,

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North of the 20th Parallel

Industry

11. Continued construction of blast walls around electric powerplants indicates North Vietnamese preparations for a possible resumption of the bombing in the northern part of the country.

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Such walls are currently under construction at the Nam Dinh, Haiphong West, and Hon Gai powerplants. Although construction at most of these plants apparently began during the first quarter of 1968, most of the work has been done since the bombing restrictions in the North. Construction around the Hanoi powerplant, which began in mid-1967, has been completed.

12. Although the Haiphong West Powerplant appeared to be active [redacted] it may be producing only steam. If this plant is producing electricity, eight of the nine powerplants in the main Hanoi-Haiphong network are in partial operation, with a capability of producing at nearly one-half of the network's pre-strike capacity of 148,000 kilowatts. One kiln at the Haiphong Cement Plant may now be in sustained operation. There are still no signs of repair activity at either the Bac Giang Fertilizer Plant or the Thai Nguyen Iron and Steel Complex.

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Logistics

13. The North Vietnamese continue to repair bomb damage and to construct new bypasses around potential choke points. [redacted] the Doumer Bridge indicates that it is now serviceable for rail traffic along with all of the other original bridges on the Hanoi-Dong Dang rail line. Roadbeds in the heavily cratered Haiphong Railroad Yard West are being rebuilt, and the rail spur to the Loi Dong Petroleum Storage Area has been repaired. Repair of these facilities will enable rail traffic to move more freely from Haiphong and will restore the use of two storage and transshipment areas convenient to the port. A rail pontoon bypass bridge at Hai Duong on the Hanoi-Haiphong line apparently is being replaced by a more permanent type of crossing. Three spans of the six-span bridge are being closed by steel beams.

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14. A total of 15 new rail bypasses has been identified [redacted] These bypasses, constructed around rail yards, bridges, and tunnels, will provide alternate routes that will help to maintain service in the event of a resumption of the bombing in the North.

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15. Repair activity also has been noted at Haiphong Shipyard No. 4, North Vietnam's largest and most important ship repair facility. Light damage was inflicted on this facility in January 1968. As yet, no efforts have been made to repair the smaller, but more heavily damaged, shipyards in Haiphong.

Air

16. The capability of North Vietnam's Air Force also has been increased. The 1,500-foot extension of the 6,000-foot runway at Kep Airfield has been completed. All craters have been filled at Haiphong/Kien An.

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Foreign Trade and Aid

18. The North Vietnamese delegation headed by Le Thanh Nghi signed trade and aid agreements with Rumania [redacted] Czechoslovakia [redacted] and with East Germany [redacted]. Aid agreements with Rumania provide for non-reimbursable economic and military aid for 1969, non-reimbursable supplementary economic and military aid for 1968, and the postponement of repayment of some credits previously accorded. The Czechs have announced only that their agreement provides for economic, technical, and special material aid for 1969. The East Germans have announced agreements for economic aid for 1969 and supplementary economic aid for 1968. These countries also signed trade and payments agreements with North Vietnam for 1969.

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19. Aid agreements were signed previously with Hungary, Bulgaria, and Poland and, according to the North Vietnamese, included both economic and military aid for 1969 and supplementary economic and military aid for 1968. The Poles, Czechs, and East Germans have not admitted in their public announcements to providing military aid. A Czech delegation also recently signed a transport aid agreement in Hanoi. The North Vietnamese delegation is now in Moscow.

20. Attempts to increase trade with Free World countries continue. Several Japanese trading firms have been approached by the North Vietnamese to provide cotton fabric for the first time in more than two years. In addition, Communist ships reportedly will begin regular service between Antwerp and Haiphong, thus providing more direct service for goods from Western European countries.

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Morale

22. There is still no evidence of any significant change in North Vietnamese morale. [REDACTED]

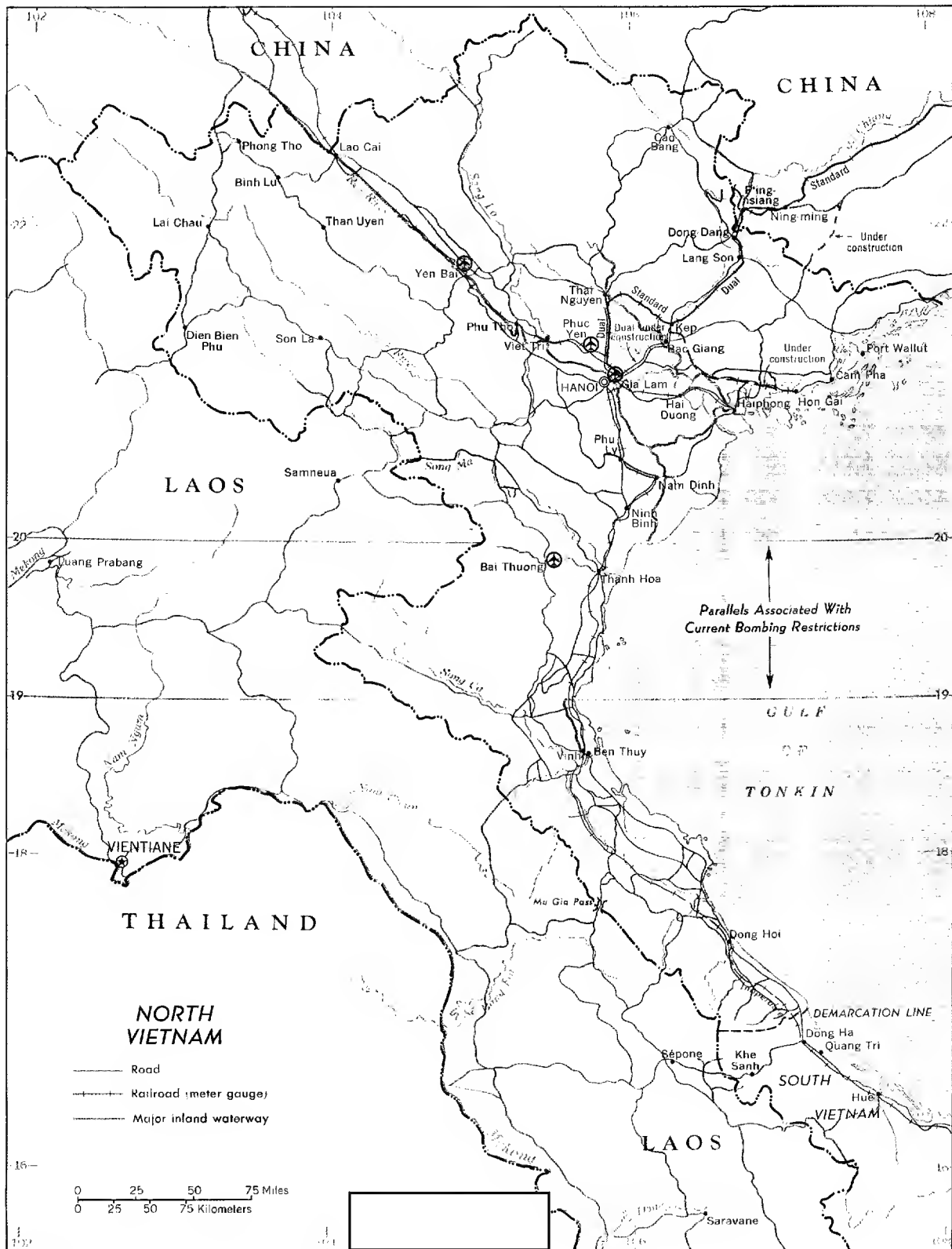
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[REDACTED] although the populace in the Hanoi area undoubtedly are relieved by the absence of bombing, there has been little change in their attitude or activity. Civil defense bunkers are still being built.

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